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TROUBLE FOR BOWSER

Mother-in-law Arrives and Makes Him Toe the Mark.

CALLS OLD MAN TO ACCOUNT.

Promises to Behave Himself After Being Bluffed to a Standstill and Now Thinks His Wife's Mother the Best Ever.

[Copyright, 1908, by T. C. McClure.]
I am Samuel Bowser's mother-in-law. The other night I had a dream about him. I dreamed that he was swelling around the house and finding fault and raising Cain generally, and the first thing in the morning, being a believer in dreams, I packed my satchel and started for the depot. I arrived at Mr. Bowser's house about an hour before he was due for dinner and found my daughter in bed sick with headache. She was also worrying over what her husband would say when he came home and found the routine of the house interrupted.

"Mary, you just cease to worry about him," says I as tears stood in her



HE WAS LEANING AGAINST AN IRON FENCE.

eyes. "Your mother is here to look out for you, and if Samuel comes home and goes to cavorting around he'll hear something drop. If he comes home with a 'spell' on there'll be a shindy that'll make his hair curl."

The hired girl had been posted before Mr. Bowser reached home, and he didn't get a hint of my presence. When he entered the house and failed to greet him he banged the front door and stamped around until he was told that Mrs. Bowser was lying down with a headache.

"She is, eh?" he shouted. "Lying down with a headache, is she? Who brought on the headache?"

The girl informed him that she didn't know.

"But I do," he blustered. "She's been eating pickles and oranges and bananas and a lot of other truck. Don't tell me she hasn't, for I know better. Headache, and the house all upset! Nice old ranch this for a man to come home to! It's no wonder that ten thousand husbands in the United States are driven to drink every year. We'll see about that headache."

With that he came tramping upstairs, and I hid in the clothes closet. He made more noise than a horse coming up, and he had no sooner entered the room than he almost yelled out:

"Well, this is the last of you! I've warned you a thousand times over, but it has done no good. It's no use in going for the doctor. Any one can see that your days are numbered."

"It's only a headache," said Mrs. Bowser as she tried to smile.

"Only! Only a headache! And what is that headache going to lead to? Woman, if you have brought about your own death don't blame me. You can't hog down a dozen bananas, skins and all, and expect to live more than a few hours."

"I haven't eaten a banana in two months."

"Then it's raw cabbage or some such thing. Well, don't look to me for any sympathy. I shall bury you, of course, but don't expect anything more."

Some of His Actions.

Then he tipped over a chair, walked over to the bureau and opened the drawers and slammed them shut and had begun to whistle as loud as he could when my daughter asked:

"Mr. Bowser, won't you send for mother?"

"Send for your mother?" he fairly howled as he whirled around on her. "Send for that old bat! Never! Never in this world!"

"But if I am going to die I should like her with me."

"She can't come. If she was here I know just what she would do. She'd—"

"So do I know!" I said as I suddenly walked out on him.

Mr. Bowser staggered over to a chair and sank into it, and his face turned as white as flour. He had been caught red handed. I stood giving him the stony stare for a long three minutes, and then he worked up nerve enough to ask:

"Who invited you down here at this time?"

"I didn't have to wait for an invitation. Dinner is on the table, and we will go down. We can talk as we eat."

"There's no talking to be done," he sulkily observed as he drew away.

"There's a heap of it, Samuel, and I want you to come along."

He shut his jaw and stuck out for awhile, but eventually followed me downstairs. Then he tried to grab his hat and overcoat and make a sneak for it, but I had an eye on him and prevented it. I finally got him down to the dining room and the table, but he refused to eat. That made no difference in the programme, however. I began to talk to him like a mother-in-law. I am an elderly woman of pronounced opinions. I proceeded to reel off some of those opinions for his benefit. He hadn't got more than a quarter of a dose before he rose up to go, saying something about suicide, but I squatted him down and kept him there until I had said all I wanted to.

Mr. Bowser wasn't exactly quiescent under my fire. He uttered exclamations about cats and bats and mothers-in-law, and fourteen different times he said that he would leave the house if I didn't, but we were both there when I got through talking—that is, when I got through talking for just then. I went upstairs to see my daughter and had scarcely got there when I heard him rattling and banging at the furnace in the cellar. I descended part way and stopped him by threats of the crowbar. Then he took a notion to fix a deer in the kitchen, and I had to make some blood curdling threats before he would cease hammering and sawing. Then he came up into the sitting room and got out an old harp and began strumming on it and singing. I didn't have to waste words on him on this occasion. As soon as he saw me coming he cuddled down, and I left him playing solitaire with a pack of cards as I went up again.

Then Mr. Bowser sneaked on me. Half an hour later I came down to make some fresh tea and found him gone. I am that sort of woman that when I strike a son-in-law's trail I never leave it until he is my mutton. I put on my things and went looking for Mr. Bowser. I heard of him on several corners, but it was nearly an hour before I overhauled him. He was leaning against an iron fence with his hands in his pockets and his hat pulled down, but I knew him at once. He started off as I grabbed for his ear, but a kind hearted little boy, whom I shall certainly remember in my will, ran ahead of me and seized him by the coat tails and hung on until I could come up.

"Come home, Samuel," I said as I got a good hold.

How He Was Bluffed.

He said he'd die right then and there first, but he didn't. A policeman came along and advised him to trot, and thus I got him home. Then I sat down and took a chair in front of him and labored with him—that is, I began a monologue that lasted for three hours, and every time he pretended to doze off I gave him the toe of my shoe and roused him up. I waded into the Bowsers for a hundred years back. I compared him to an owl, a polecat, a toad, a gobbler and a hundred other things. I hurled threats at him that brought shivers to my own spine. Whenever he tried to protest I menaced him. Whenever he tried to get up to go I threatened his life.

Three hours did the trick. The bluffer was bluffed. I wore him right down. His wife could have done it years ago if she had only had the grit and the pertinacity. If she had gone for him the first time he ever yelled "Woman!" at her he would have been as humble as a rabbit the rest of his days. After the first hour I saw that I was gaining on it, and I never let up for a minute until the bells struck 1 o'clock. Then Mr. Bowser suddenly collapsed in a heap, and after I had rubbed a wet rag over his face and revived him he rose up and put his arms around me and murmured:

"Oh, you dear old thing, but I'm so thankful that you came and that we have had this delightful talk together!"

At the present writing he is following me about the house and wishing he could die for me, and I think I have him bluffed for as much as two weeks ahead. Mothers-in-law, try my recipe, and take no other.

SARAH THOMPSON,
Mother-in-law of Mr. Bowser.
Per M. Quad.

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